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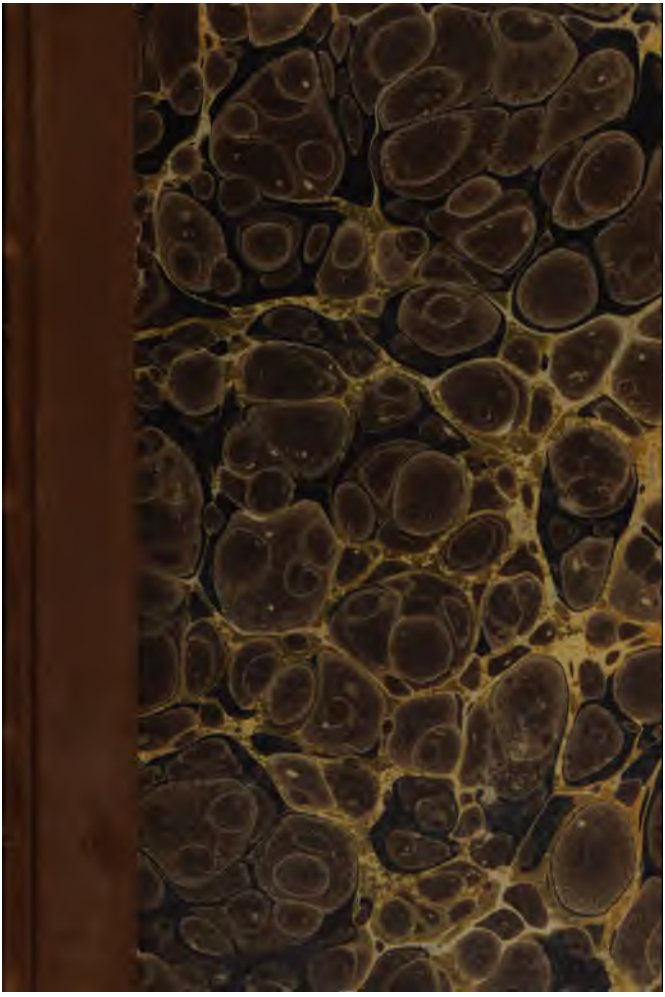

48. 1824.

48. 1824.

" The quadrille finished, the Flirt will not take any refreshment, but sits down at once by her chaperon, rather cross; until she sees " Charley Lincoln " through the muslin of the front drawing-room doorway as he comes up stairs; and then her eyes sparkle once more."

# THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE FLIRT

BIBLIOTHECA · BODLEIANA ·

BY ALBERT SMITH.

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TO

HENRY COLLINGWOOD IBBETSON, ESQ.

THIS LITTLE BOOK

IS DEDICATED,

WITH THE SINCERE REGARDS

OF HIS FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

# THE FLIRT.

## THE INVOCATION.

*NOUS!* graceful, glorious Girls! Come on, fair young witches, who alone determine whether, by your presence or absence, the most splendid evening party ever given shall be a brilliant *succès* or a dismal failure. Wreathe your white arms into a magic circle round our desk, through which for awhile no duller subject shall dare to intrude.

Crowd on, with your choicest and most charming attributes, one and all—objects of that light and joyous love which, like champagne, intoxicated only for the time, and left such little remorse behind.

Come, Annie, with the long dark hair, and darker eyes:

And Emma, with those dazzling teeth that flashed for very whiteness between the rosy lips:

And Bessy, with the silken plaits, and long cheek-sweeping lashes:

And "*Belle de Nuit*," for that is the only name we shall give you, fair creature, with those

scented ringlets compromised into bands by being looped together round the small white ear; so daring in the most rapid polka—

so unequalled in the *renversé* of the *deux-temps*.

Still, come on—Fanny, with that lovely complexion, which got us into disgrace for saying we did not believe in it:

Ellen, with those polished rounded shoulders:

And Amy, with those taper fingers that were still too small for the smallest gloves—wagered and lost—Houbigant or Huber could furnish.

Appear! Alice, of the rippling chesnut tresses, that flew all over our eyes in that final "Post-horn":

Blanche, whose low tremulous contralto concentrated our entire world at the side of that cottage piano:

And Marian, with the large black pupils, in which, dilated with such depth of lustre, we saw our tiny photographic semblances, when we leant that evening over the garden parapet of the Castle at Richmond, and quoted "Locksley Hall," and you blushed in the twilight at the lines:

Many an evening, by the waters, did we watch the stately ships,
And our spirits rushed together at the touching of the lips."—

The "waters" being those of the Thames, and the "stately ships" the London steamboats, on board one of which the band was playing "Love Not," with such a warning emphasis.

And thou—most fair and daring of them all, whose name shall share the secrecy of

"Son Nom" in Louisa Puget's charming ballad—who, when the heads of your family were out of town, and your cousin was staying with you, said you were going to your aunt's in Westbourne Terrace, with whom she was not on good terms, and came with us to the Lyceum, sitting well behind the muslin curtains to laugh at

*Box and Cox*—which will not be believed, we know, and if it was, would be considered disgusting by all properly-constituted minds—come thou, too, to inspire us.

They are here! The air is redolent of Patchouli and Bouquet de la Victoria. Light forms, but still mortal, with all the airiness that tarlatane can give—that attractive tarlatane which will not wash and is so soon done for, as well we know—are flitting round the room; and the rustling of their dresses as they flock about us, makes an enchanting murmur.

And now—to begin.

# CHAPTER I.

## WHICH IS CHIEFLY DEFINITIVE.

"Several young flirts about town had a design to cast us out of the fashionable world."—ADDISON.

IT is difficult to tell at what period the word *Flirt*, in its present sense, first became established in our language.

Applying, as usual, to Doctor Johnson for intelligence on the subject, we find the following:—

"To FLIRT, *v. n.* To run about perpetually; to be unsteady and fluttering.

"FLIRT, *n. s.* A pert young hussey.

"FLIRTATION. A quick sprightly motion. A cant term amongst women."

These definitions are anything but satisfactory. Dr. Johnson evidently knew nothing at all about the matter. We do not expect he ever flirted: we feel convinced that had he tried to do so, he would have said something so dreadfully harsh and crushing, that the fair butterfly would soon have been broken on the wheel by his coarse savage blows.

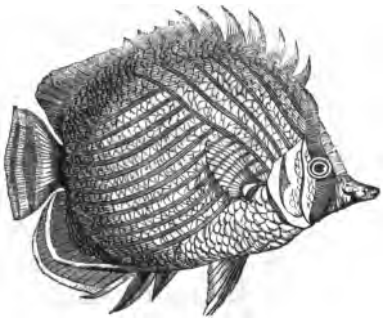
In later times the ingenious Maunder—whose *Treasury of Knowledge* would be such a good book if its marginal proverbs did not constantly compel you to keep turning it in all directions to read them—is no more explicit. He still sticks to "A pert hussey," omitting the "young;" and, further on, defines "Hussey" to be a "worthless woman." Half a century has not sufficed to clear Mr. Maunder's notions on the subject. He has only flirted with the Muses.

Lastly, the *Penny Cyclopædia* blinks the

word altogether, which is a great pity, since some nice illustrative wood-cuts would have been a great relief. You can conceive how much more attractive this would have been of

[*Puella excellens*, or Charming Girl.]

with an account of the habits and instincts, favourite localities, varieties, and subgenera; than this of the



[*Chætodon vagabundus.*]

Sect. *Acanthopterygii.* Family, *Squammipennes.*

So we are driven to give our own definition; and this we do after the most approved zoological system, as follows:—

| | |
|---|---|
| *Class*, | Fair Sex. |
| *Order*, | Nice Girl. |
| *Species*, | Valseuse. |
| *Genus*, | Flirt. |

# CHAPTER II.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE FLIRT.

"I was merry, I was merry,
When my little lovers came."

IT is Twelfth Night; or any other evening in the Christmas holidays appropriated to festivity that you please to fix upon; and a party of little people are collected together. There is negus for them — very weak, but very delicious—and pieces of cake so large that the old caution of taking care of their toes would not be so much out of place.

And in the midst of the table is a beautiful Christmas tree, glittering with bonbons, small toys, and twinkling lights, at which all the little eyes are gazing, almost with wonder, as they never before imagined that such beautiful things grew, unconnected with fairy tales.

At the end of the table a tiny flirtation has been going on all supper-time, between a little elfin lady of five years old, and a young gentleman who has not yet exchanged his tunic for a jacket. He holds her baby hand in his, and looks terrible things at Master Howard, who sits on the other side and will keep putting his arm round her neck and kissing her, which is a shocking thing to do at any time of life—in company. Then the first pulls the little *belle* closer to him, and says that she shall be *his* wife; and did not an elder sister set them all to rights, the consequences would be dreadful.

For Master Howard is a bad boy, and the terror of the square within the rails. He can pinch with singular sharpness, and makes predatory excursions amongst the other childrens' nine-pins and pewter Life-guards. And at parties like the present, he has been known to beat the more submissive guests with their

own dolls, even to tears; or knock them, with the gay *brioche*, off from the sofa, converted for the time into a coach, drawn by two arm-chairs and a music-stool, unicorn.

When Master Howard is quieted, the two others get together closer than ever, and the little girl perhaps says "I love you," with a sincerity and disinterested fervour that only belongs to that age. And then they have some little joke between them, not known to anybody else, but of such subtle excellence, that it is only sufficient for them to look at one another to burst out into the merriest and most musical laughter.

The attachment is no affair of secrecy. He won't dance with anybody else; and when they play at *Family coach*—and she is "Aunt Jemima," and he is "the little dog," and that singular accumulation of misfortune begins which characterized the luckless journey in that ill-fated vehicle—whatever may be the confusion and

changes of seats, for forfeits, they are always next to one another.

Next morning they meet in the enclosure. She expects him, and she wears her little short dress and *visite*—so well *bouffé* that they form a constant "cheese" about her—with an additional air, when she sees him coming. And then—little puss!—she pretends to pass him, as she

hides her face with her lilliputian parasol, only to turn back and laugh.

Before long, perchance, the families are no longer neighbours. The boy goes from his tutor to Eton; from Eton, possibly, to Cambridge, or the Coldstream Guards. The girl grows up, comes out, and changes to a Flirt. And when they meet, in after times, neither recollects the other, so many loves have since affected them.

# CHAPTER III.

## OF THE FLIRT AT AN EVENING PARTY.

"A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage bell."

POSSIBLY, the Flirt appears in her chief phase and her greatest brilliancy at an evening party. We will then proceed to describe her there.

She comes somewhat late—as the nicest persons always do—and, as she passes up the room, with the glow of conscious beauty on her cheek, giving the

lie to her eyes so meekly downcast, is said by the girls "to think a great deal of herself," and by the young men leaning against the door to be "something nice." If they are a little fast, they proclaim her "a stunner;" but this is observed in a low tone, because it is a reckless phrase, verging on the improper.

She refuses the first invitation to dance, because she is not sure of the cavalier presented to her, wishing to see first what he can accomplish in the *deux-temps* before she commits her waltzing reputation to him. Or possibly she is under a promise, for the first waltz, to young Langford Miles of the Treasury, whom she strongly suspects of having sent her the

anonymous bouquet, in the morning; or her brother's leading friend, "Charley Lincoln" of the Blues—and neither have yet arrived.

She is greatly admired by a blushing young man with no whiskers, a white neckcloth, and shoes, who stands by the door. Being introduced for the quadrille, she hears him say something about "first set," which she does not exactly comprehend, only knowing one; and subsequently finding that he is vague with respect to a *vis-à-vis*, and that in the last figure he goes off in the "promenade" *l'été*, she takes no more notice of him. So that when the poor young man has asked her "Which opera she thinks will do best this season?" he has not the courage to propound another question, but feels very small.

The quadrille finished, the Flirt will not take any refreshment, but sits down at once by her chaperon, rather cross; until she sees "Charley Lincoln" through the muslin of

the front drawing-room doorway as he comes up stairs; and then her eyes sparkle once more.

The waltz begins, and the favoured cavalier edges his way along the room, with well-assumed unconcern, towards her. There is no need of

an introduction; before eight more bars are over they are up together, and having quietly and politely, but with great determination, knocked a few lumbering old *trois temps* out of the circle—men who keep their partners at

arm's length, and girls who turn their heads first over one shoulder and then over the other as they waltz—they go off and ahead, and soon clear their own way.

Our Flirt likes waltzing with Lincoln for many reasons. She admires his moustachios and lovely shirt-fronts; and above all, he waltzes so beautifully himself—she cannot put him out of step—and holds one so tight!

The waltz concludes, and the Flirt this time will go down for refreshment. And then her reappearance in the ball-room does not take place for a long time. Once away, they take pos-

session of a *causeuse*—one of those comical double chairs, which, although turned different ways, always bring the people on them face to face—and then she keeps talking to young Lincoln, leaning back, and pulling the petals from her

bouquet with an intensity as if her whole existence was brought down to a point in that meeting.

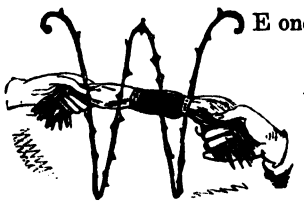
And so it is. We never will have the Flirt called heartless. Her heart is as much concerned in her flirtations, whilst they are being carried on, as that of the most "amiable" young lady. But the devotion is transient—

the flame kindled by thus stirring up the heart is like that produced by poking a fire; very vivid whilst it lasts, but soon over—which we take to be a great advantage on either side; inasmuch as you experience all the *agrémens* of occupying the thoughts of a pretty girl without being asked your intentions after a day or two, or in any way caught into the somewhat solemn happiness of feeling that you are "engaged."

# CHAPTER IV.

## OF THE FLIRT AS CONNECTED WITH CRACKER BONBONS.

"What cracker is this same that deafs our ears?"—*King John*



E once took some little pains to show those who delighted in parties, what twaddle emanated from an establishment devoted to sugar confectionary, and known as the "*Fidèle Bergère*," in the Rue des Lombards, in Paris, having for its avowed object the diffusion of pleasantry and light love-making.

Everybody knows those kisses, burnt almonds, and sugar-plums, in their envelopes of gaudy paper, with the concealed Waterloo cracker inside, which it is so common to explode at supper time; and everybody also knows that the motto, which this discharge of tiny artillery sets free, bearing the date of the establishment above-mentioned, is generally the most stupid, unmeaning thing it is possible to conceive.

Sometimes it is a small French sermon upon "Sensibility," or other lively subject; sometimes a slow definition of a word, or a poor imitation of Rochefoucault—all tending to damp the spirits and promote melancholy. If the lines be in English, they are about as entertaining as those subjoined, which have been really selected from a quantity:—

"Beauty always fades away,
Virtue will for ever stay."

Or,

"The best affections of my heart are thine,
If you to my petition will incline."

Or,

"What is beauty but a bait,
Oft repented when too late?"

Seeing how silly these ideas were, we suggested the following, which at least had the merit of inducing thinking, and by their matter-of-fact truth tended to do away with a great deal of the false atmosphere with which society is invested.

Here was the Reflective:—

When the master and mistress smile through the night,
Oh! do not believe that their bosoms are light.
Think of the plate they have had to borrow,
And the state that the house will be in to-morrow!

The Cautious:—

Though after a Polka with somebody nice,
You get sentimental whilst down stairs for ice,
Before you attempt her affections to win
First try and discover the state of the tin.

The Probable :—

Oh! had we but a little isle,
On which the sun might always smile,
There to reside alone with thee—
How tired out we soon should be!

The Admonitory :—

Recollect a bad Polkiste don't get much renown.
If you can't dance it well, you had better sit down.

The Moral :—

Love 's a trifle, fleeting soon,
Vows are the froth, and man the spoon.

The Economical :—

If the night 's not very dry,
Find out those who 've got a fly,
Whose way home your own one suits,
Because wet walking ruins boots.

The Prudent :—

He whose gloves are new and white,
Can clean them for another night;
But he who wears them parties twain,
Can never have them cleaned again.

These, however, by the way; they are meant for society generally. But for the Flirt another

kind is still required; a little verse that might express in an instant all that eyes had been trying to do for the entire evening; a pretty line or two from contemporary love-poets; a little less of the conventional Valentine school of writing. With such much might be done to aid philandering, for the motto would be eagerly looked forward to.

At present the cracker bonbons are emblems of marriage rather than love. Hands are joined and the match severs the union. A common-place lecture tumbles out, enveloping a solitary kiss, which possibly after all, being tasted, is found to contain nothing but aniseed.

The Flirt loves the bonbons nevertheless; and you may be certain, upon hearing the first snap, that she is the culprit. You never find her, however, at the table. She is always at the side or in a corner of the room, appropriating the edge of the side-board, a few inches of the mantel-piece, or a shelf of the Canter-

bury to herself. Or she may be buried once more in the only arm-chair left in the room, because it was so big that there was nowhere to put it had it been taken out.

But you can always find her by the first cracker bonbon, accompanied by her light musical laughter. And then the snap and the laughter is followed up, and presently all is joyous noise and revelry. For your pretty Flirt is the best charm against gloom at an evening party that can be found. Her spirits and beauty will float half-a-dozen dull and uninteresting girls with them, who would otherwise sink into perfect uselessness. And wherever she is, the supper is never solemn, which in her absence it is apt to become—a dismal meal whereat nothing is heard but the knives and forks; and any one who pulled a cracker would be frightened to death at his or her rashness, the instant they heard the report and perceived the dead silence it induced.

After the Flirt has fired the first shot the revolution commences, and the reports become general. The *épergnes* are stormed for fresh arms; barricades of gilt paper are thrown up; and the bonbons are compelled to abdicate somewhat suddenly, whilst a republic of merriment is established, and many engagements take place—but only for the next Polka. And then the Flirt begins to read very steadily the last motto that her partner has given her, which goes as follows:—

"Que ne ferais-je pas pour obtenir de vous,
Jeune amie, un aveu, qui courannat ma flamme?
Laissez agir mes feux, qu'ils passent dans votre ame,
Et vous eprouverez les plaisirs les plus doux."

Having read which she laughs, and squeezes in her eyes and looks wicked, and puts it into her glove, and then she ruthlessly despoils several bonbons, examining their mottoes, and throwing

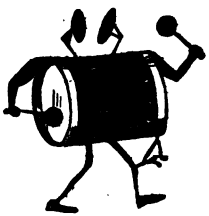
them away, until, until she finds an old favourite, and gives it to him. He reads:—

"Ni le lieu par sa distance,
Ni le temps par sa longueur,
N'auraient jamais la puissance,
De vous eloigner de mon cœur."

And then they begin to talk to one another so earnestly, that some of the guests say, in reply to observations, "Oh! that's an old affair between Margaret Howard and young Lincoln:" and others, less charitable, with plain families, "would be sorry to see *their* daughters make themselves so conspicuous."

Whereas, in point of conspicuousness, the Flirt and her favourite are the least open to the charge of any in the room. And, indeed, so wrapped up are they in themselves, that it is until some little time after the last crinoline is compressed, through the young men waiting to come in, in the door-way, she perceives she is the last lady left in the room; and that the

rest are already dancing a quadrille by themselves up stairs to the universal band of the orchestrina, which, with all the stops out, must be the instrument upon which Verdi the Violent composes his operas.



# CHAPTER V.

## OF THE OLGA WALTZ IN ITS RELATION TO FLIRTING.

"To one and all, the lovely stranger came,
And every ball-room echoes with her name."

BYRON.

ON the commencement of a winter afternoon, we would have you picture the library of a fine old country-house. The windows overlook a river, which is swollen and turbid, making level the weir and the back-water, and gurgling

about the trunks of the skeleton trees that dart up from the leaden-coloured stream, now deep over the islets on which they grow. Guns are frequently heard, ringing in the high woods about the house, and dying in long reverberating echoes along the vale of the river; and a party of ladies are seen, through the bare shrubs of the copse, going to meet the shooters.

Nobody is at home but two individuals, in the old library. One, a lady, young and pretty, is turning over some French songs, and trying them vaguely. The other, a gentleman, thinks he is listening to them, as he never moves his eyes from her face.

Some of the songs are very pretty. There is "*Mire dans mes yeux les yeux*," and "*Toi*," and "*Je t'aime parce que je t'aime*," "*Je crois en toi*," "*Ce n'est pas ta dot*" and many others.

At last they came to "*La Folle*." Possibly you do not know that touching song. It is supposed to be sung by some poor girl who has

gone mad from love. She met the faithless one at a ball, and she is continually murmuring the tune of the Valse, during which the burning words that caused her misery were whispered in her ear. The air of the Valse is introduced all through the song, breaking in upon the accompaniment, even to the end, where, after the delirious burst of excitement in which she sings:

"Que j'aime le plaisir, la parure et la danse,"

she falters at once to the wailing confession,

"Et que je souffre, O mon Dieu! rien qu'en pensant a *lui!*"

The song is sung by the young lady, who is an adept in flirting, with all the effect that a mezzo-soprano voice—low and trembling—can give to it. And then they both think of the waltz they had last night, when the large room was lighted up and the neighbouring families made up such a good party—and recal what passed

between them during it: and recollect that the waltz was "The Olga."

Unconsciously the pretty girl follows out the train of thought with her fingers, and commences playing the air.

"Did it never strike you what a pretty ballad the Olga would make, played slowly?" she asks.

"Never until now," replies her companion.

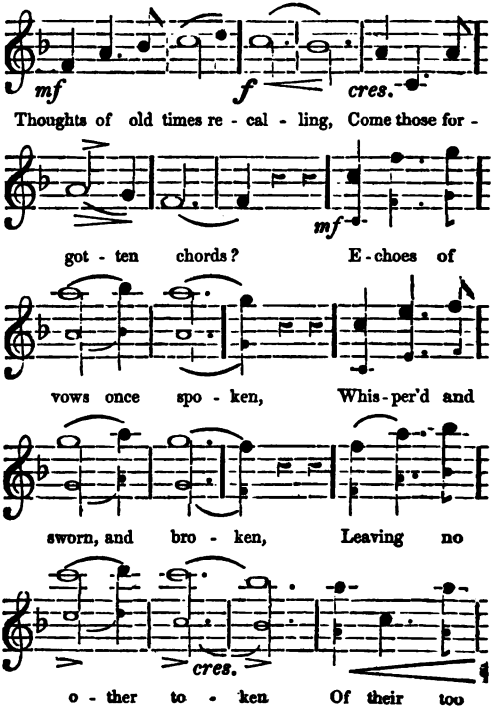
"It would be quite an English *La Folle*," she goes on; "only the girl need not be mad—broken-hearted, and that sort of thing; nothing more."

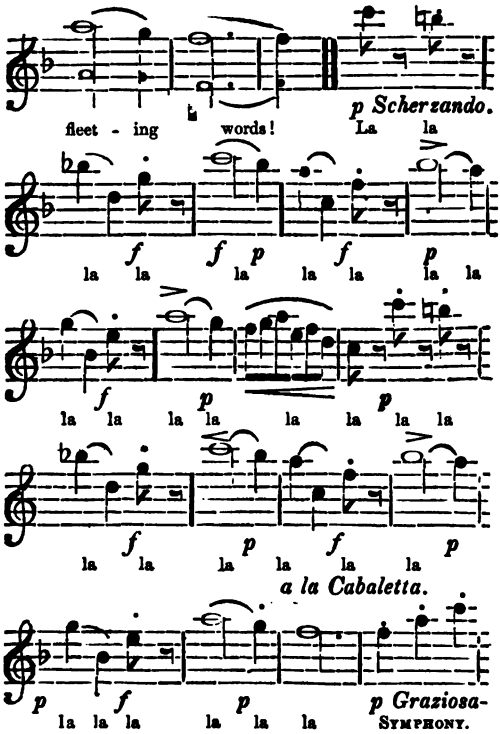
And then after much labour, and pursuit of rhymes under difficulty, the following words to the air of the Queen of all waltzes, are pencilled out on the back of a piece of music.

## SOUVENIR D'UN BAL.

BALLAD, *written to "The Olga."*

[The air is here printed by the kind permission of M. Jullien. It is in the published key, and will not be found suitable for the voice; but the smallest knowledge of music will suffice for its arrangement.]


mf
f
cres.
Thoughts of old times re - cal - ling, Come those for -
mf
got - ten chords? E - choes of
vows once spo - ken, Whis - per'd and
sworn, and bro - ken, Leaving no
cres.
o - ther to - ken Of their too


p Scherzando.
fleet - ing words! La la
f f p f p
la la la la la la la
f p p
la la la la la la la la
f p f p
la la la la la la
a la Cabaletta.
p f p p Graziosa-
la la la la la la SYMPHONY.

mente.
cres.
cres.
ff

II.

Hope in its bright times shaded,
Life in its spring-tide faded,
Even the past upbraided,
Through that entrancing hour!
Why will such rays of gladness
End but in gloom and sadness,
Driving the thoughts to madness,
By their too fatal power?
La la la, &c.

At night, the Flirt tries this, and it goes off with great effect—so great indeed that she finds she has one more powerful charm at her disposal, to attract the butterfly young men about the light of her presence. And the song getting about and being copied, is circulated and sung. And then, in consequence, during The Olga, everybody feels bound to flirt as much as they can—a duty to which some strange utterly inexplicable property in the tune always impels one.

So you will see that whenever that waltz is struck up, there is more excitement manifested than at any other dance of the evening.

## CHAPTER VI.

### OF THE CHATELAINE, THE CORAL CHARMS, AND THE PIANO, AS AIDS TO FLIRTATION.

"Beauty and use can so well agree together, that of all the trinkets wherewith they are attired, there is not one but serves to some necessary purpose."—SIDNEY.

IN those dismal affairs, known at certain dreamy theatres as "fine old standard comedies," which harmless—nay, even good and amiable—people, who have done nothing wrong, are often savagely com-

pelled to sit out, the character of an old housekeeper, or farmer's wife, is sometimes to be met with, perpetually jingling a bunch of keys at her side. Ten to one, were research extended, there would be found in her pocket a small rolled-up museum of needles, silk, shirt buttons and bodkins known as the domestic housewife—the "hussiff" of the vulgar tongue. And, moreover, might be produced a scent-bottle, with a battered screw silver top; a pincushion; a nutmeg grater, and, perchance, a piece of old iron.

All these things resulted from the confusion of the tribes of utilities, which the Châtelaine of the middle ages patronized. She herself was the *moyen age* for "housewife:" and the keys, the scent-box, the grater, the pincushion, and the bit of horse-shoe, once hung from the article named after her, at her side.

The Châtelaine had long been forgotten. Those who went to Paris, and whom good-for-

tune led into the still and time-honoured—almost sacred—old rooms of the Hotel de Cluny, in the Rue des Mathurins, perchance saw one, amidst the interesting memorials of former times which M. du Sommerard had there col-

ected and displayed; and which brought back the old homes of the middle ages so vividly, where the Châtelaine once filled the post of hostess. But the rage for the old, and the long-passed-by, burst forth: and Wardour Street rose. Heavy scraps of dingy point lace, and dimmed

and rust-speckled armour—blackened carvings, and dusky painted glass—huge brazen dishes, curious goblets, and cumbersome weapons, acquired a strange value, and with them the Châtelaines also reappeared, and came into favour; first in their pristine forms of quaint old gilt tablets linked together, in company with the dependent articles before spoken of;

and next, lightly forged and imitated in sparkling steel chains, with everything annexed that could be thought of for a want.

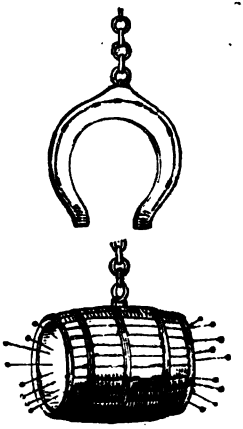
The Châtelaine no longer hung at the side of age and garrulous decrepitude. Young hearts throbbed against it, making the lights flash from its polished facets at every pulsation: or, at times, the breath of low soft words, whispered

over it, and full of meaning, dulled its lustre. Elsewise, too, the language, instead of coming from withered lips, was spoken by floating, youthful eyes.

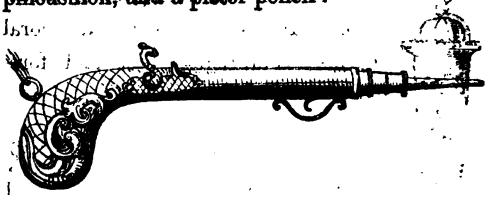
Then it was that all sorts of things were attached to the Châtelaine that could furnish subject-matter to talk about. And then, the Flirt found out how charming it was in an old country house—in the embayed window of the hall by day, when the men who liked to struggle through long brambles for six hours, had gone shooting: or the most unobtrusive corner of the darkening drawing-room, by twilight, when they had all come back again, tired—how charming it was to go over the Châtelaine piece by piece, and talk about each one. There was such room for so much about anything—for you might hang anything to it, from a lucky sixpence to a *lorgnette*, if you chose.

There might be a vinaigrette, a desk-key, and a tiny watch, no bigger than a shilling:

A pair of scissors like a bird:

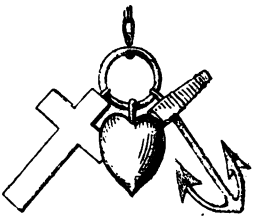


A horse-shoe against witchcraft; a barrel pincushion, and a pistol pencil:



Or, haply, a thimble-case, made like a wise owl, in silver, with enamel eyes:

And possibly a heart, a cross, and an an-



chor, typifying Faith, Hope, and Charity:

Or a paper-cutter.

And then, on a ring all to themselves, came little Neapolitan coral charms; comprising, first and foremost,

The remedy against an evil eye.

And then a boot, a mouse, and a Punch's head in a slipper:

Together with other anomalies.

But all these things did to talk about, especially the locket, of which nothing

could be learnt beyond what a sigh told. And then the young lady found out that the young gentleman also had a locket, hanging from his watch-guard, like this;

but about it she could learn nothing, for he would not tell.

What the conversation over the Châtelaine was about, would be very stupid upon paper, if reported literally. But the following attempt may, in a measure, embody its tendency; albeit we have small pretensions to poetry.

### THE CHATELAINE.

On the Oriel's old recesses
  Floods of light fall, many-hued,
Streaming through those silken tresses,
  With their golden rays imbued.
Twinkling leaves, to mullions clinging,
  Quiver on each tinted pane,
Shadows in the noon-tide flinging
  On your Châtelaine.

Charms of other climes and ages
Still possessing unknown powers;
Fairy knife to cut the pages
That shall wile the summer hours;
Locket quaint, or by-gone token,
Hanging by a golden chain,
With the old coin, bent or broken,
From your Châtelaine.

Smallest things may bear a moral,
If we read the sense aright;
E'en that tiny hand of coral,
Charm against an evil blight,
Points this lesson with its finger—
Hearts from malice must refrain,
Baneful thoughts should never linger
Near your Châtelaine.

Cover'd with enamel flowers
That small watch, without compeer,
Shows how pass the summer hours
On their flight, when you are near.
Tiny chronicler of pleasure,
Unalloyed by slightest pain,
Bringing Time to such small measure,
Near your Châtelaine.

*Etui* chased with olden stories,
Made domestic things to hold,
Shows some former housewives' glories,
Gleaming through the latticed gold,

Linking with the past, the present,
Could they but return again,
They would gaze, with wonder pleasant,
On your Châtelaine.

They have been as long forgotten
As the work they did achieve,
And the tapestry is rotten
Which their fingers once did weave.
Yet these means of their creating
Tremble with fresh life again,
With your heart's own beat vibrating
From your Châtelaine.

Poetry, if the foregoing can be called such, and music go together; and this brings us to the grand Asylum for Distressed Flirts—who are hunted about by watchful eyes—the Piano.

The Piano Flirt must be a good musician; for this reason—if she is not, she will play "nonsense music" all the time she is talking; or, in giving up too much of her attention to the notes, her conversation will be feeble and unconnected. And this is more palpable if she is playing a quadrille. All amateur dance

music is atrociously uncomfortable; but more than ordinarily so when the young lady who is performing is carrying on a piano-side flirtation

with the young cavalier who won't dance with anybody else, for then she plays on, long after the figure has finished, in spite of all the efforts of the active gentleman in the wig, who keeps

clapping his hands and saying, "Thank you, Miss Beaumont, that is all." But at last, being made to understand that another tune is required, she simply begs their pardon, and turns over to the *finale* of "The Chatsworth."

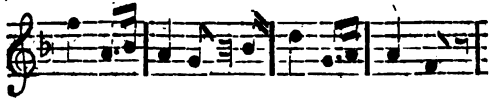
In the above case the music is properly set down, and all goes on tolerably well. But if the young lady is merely indulging in a desultory performance, scrambling over the opening bars of various airs as they strike her, not playing to anybody in particular—only one or two friends dispersed about the room reading or doing *crochet*, whilst the favoured one is "turning over the leaves" for her—the style of accompanied recitative that goes on is as subjoined.

It will be seen that it is in the manner of Antigone's bewailing—that is to say, speaking to music; which is usually considered a most difficult task, inasmuch as the eminent Mr. Macready would not risk it, even at the Queen's

desire. And it will also be seen that continuity is quite set at defiance, and the tunes end abruptly, as leaves are rapidly turned over; and that there is no counting, nor indeed any time at all kept.

To enter into the spirit of the following, it is essential that it should be played. As all young ladies are capable of doing so, it is not necessary to say any more to them; but if, gentle reader, you are of the other sex, ask some fair creature to play it for you. Sisters are to be avoided, if anything, except indeed the sister be some one's else.

You must come to the Richmond ball. I shall make mamma send the voucher, and then you will have no excuse.



Oh! I dare say, you are engaged—of course. To your *Weippert's*, or some other of your favourite haunts.

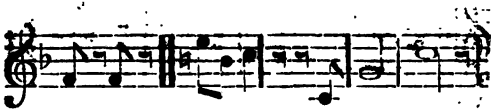
What a shame it is that you men can enjoy yourselves so. I wish I was not a girl—to go about too.

Turn over; that is it. Look at mamma. I wish she would not always have the Masons here. They are so very formal

I declare they quite freeze one; and Jane thinks polking improper. The other night I don't think she danced above twice

for we only had two quadrilles all the evening; it was so good! Mind, I shall keep the first *deux-temps* for you on the 9th.

So don't come in at half-past twelve, and say you could not get away before. I suppose, if Lilly Thornton is there, we

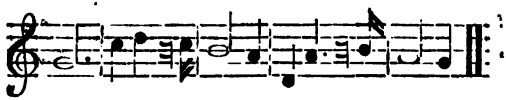


shall—turn over—shall see you at ten. Yes, I know; of course not; now there is no occasion to tell such dreadful stories

Look at that old Anne Mason. Is n't she horrible? I do hate her so, I can't tell you! I hope you admire the worsted cap.

She went and said you had been smoking, when you came to the Kendall's. I said I knew it, and I rather liked it.

See what battles I am obliged—turn over—to fight for you. The handkerchief is nearly finished; you shall have it to-morrow



Oh! my goodness; what am I playing? And they are all looking. You had better sing something. But recollect—the 9th.

And when all this has been played over two or three dozen times with different words, the chances are that an elderly voice will say—

"My love, are you aware what time it is?"

# CHAPTER VII.

## OF THE GARRISON OR MILITARY FLIRT.

"How nobly he becomes the great battalion!
See how he shines in arms, and suns the field."

DRYDEN.

N a fine afternoon the band is playing the most charming tunes, as the company surround it on the gravel walk, or clipped velvet sward. It may be at Hampton Court; or Kensington Gardens; or on the Terrace at

Windsor Castle. But wherever it is, there you will be sure to find Harriet, and Florence, and Alicia Flower. You may go even to Winchester, Hounslow, Woolwich, Coventry, or Brighton, but there they will still be. There is not an officer in the two battalions of the Grenadiers, Coldstream, or Scots Fusileers—nay, in the Life Guards or Blues, and so on to the Light Dragoons of the Seventeenth, who does not know the "Flower girls," as they are collectively termed—who has not danced with them, walked with them, flirted with them, and ridden with them — in fact, done almost everything but proposed to them.

The father of the Flowers was an officer, and they have a brother in something at Ceylon, so they know a little of military life. But beyond this, they have the army-list by heart, and never make a mistake in calling "*Lieut.-cols.*" "Captain," or "*Lieuts.* and *Capts.*" "Mr."

They prefer the mildest ensigns and most downless cornets to civilians; and, indeed, believe in nothing but officers. They are in their glory at the Woolwich ball, which they would not miss upon any account; and have not yet recovered not having been at the Aliwal ball at Brighton.

*Par parenthèse*—an inclination of this kind is not to be wondered at. Despite the endeavours of certain funny writers and humorous artists to drop military men to something akin to the ridiculous, it requires but a small tour in society to see how immeasurably superior they are to the "ruck" of young men one encounters. Constantly mixing in the best circles, and distinguished by that easy courtesy which can be thus alone acquired; floating carelessly on the sunniest surface of the stream of life; agreeably educated, and, for the most part, endowed with that manly and thorough-bred *physique* which is the undisputed attribute of

"good blood;" it is no wonder that they are dangerous rivals. It is a great thing to be one of "nature's nobility," we know; but they have not got everything to themselves yet—at least in England: since many young officers could challenge the same number of nature's peerage at anything they pleased, and beat them by chalks as long as the entire range of cliffs from Folkestone to the Reculvers. And coming from a scion of the most common-place, confused, and unsatisfactory stock in the world, the opinion may be at least taken as a candid one.

But we are ungallantly forgetting Harriet, Florence, and Alicia Flower all this time. They are famous flirts, and precisely those species of girls known by the general attribute of "capital." They are good musicians, elegant dancers, passable artists, clever talkers, dress to perfection; and are most useful in getting up *tableaux*, having stood for the

*Graces*, or something of the kind, in classical dresses, until the *pose* is as well known as the *Ariadne* or *Eve*. And they may be termed, in a degree, the band-mistresses of the regiment; for they indirectly bespeak the tunes.

Harriet is thoughtful and romantic, and by her wish expressed to Captain Belton, as he leans against the fighting gladiator on the Eastern Terrace, the selection from the melody-teeming *Sonnambula* is performed. Florence

is decidedly military, and dotes on the march from *Nabuco*—which not being performed at Exeter Hall, was obliged to be called *Nino* here—nodding her head at the part:

and so on ; whilst Alicia, who is always engaged twelve dances deep everywhere, could listen to the

polka for ever; so that is *her* choice.

The battalion goes away—another comes, and then another; but still the "Flower girls" are the reigning *belles*. Admitting they live at Windsor—and here let it be distinctly and *earnestly* understood that we are making no personal sketches, which charge might be brought against us by thus fixing on a locality; but it is the best for our purpose—the same walks take place under the Gothic foliage at the side of the Long Walk; the same loiterings on the Terrace; the same parties at Cliefden—of which anon; and then this battalion is replaced by another, and all the programme of philandering is enacted over again.

And at last comes the terrible fact, that these nice girls never marry. So much with agreeable officers, they cannot put up with

ordinary cavaliers; and officers, however agreeable, are not always marrying men—perhaps that is the secret. As one of the "Tenth" is reported once to have observed, upon an introduction to a young lady, "He was not much given to matrimony himself, but he would mention her at the mess with the greatest pleasure," so think they. And even if a pure-minded Ensign does get up something like a

sincere attachment for the garrison-beauties, he is safe to be laughed out of it as soon as it is known.

"Why, dear old boy," they say, "you can't be thinking of Alicia Flower! Ho! ho! ho!"

And then the mess is convulsed with laughter at the bare idea.

"Aston was spooney in that quarter five years ago," says one.

"And it was never clearly made out why Graham did not marry her," adds another.

"I think he behaved damned badly," puts in a third.

"Not if you knew all," says the next.

And then the Ensign is told by the Colonel to ring the bell for some more claret, which stops this, to him, most unpleasant conversation.

The result of all this, and similar *badinage*, is, that fresh battalions still come and go, and talk over the young ladies, and still the "Flower girls" remain "as they were."

Except, possibly, the youngest, who may profit by the example of her sisters during a season in London. So that when her heart whispers to her, "Rear rank take close order —march!" she obeys the command, packs up her things, and goes off accordingly.

# CHAPTER VIII.

## OF THE FLIRT AT A PIC-NIC.

"Summer woods about them blowing—
Made a murmur in the land."

TENNYSON.

WE spoke just now of Cliefden. Perchance you may know where it is; if you do not, when the summer arrives go down on the Great Western line to the Maidenhead station, and ask at the Orkney Arms for the route to "The Springs." If it is possible that you have never been there, you will thank us at least for

making you the gainer of something from this little book, if the rest fail to amuse you.

As there may be some lovers of high art amongst our readers, who only understand description in blank verse, for their benefit we will try and tell them what this lovely spot is like, in their own fashion:

"A thick-leav'd hanging wood; the sunlight's gleam
Can scarcely quiver on the turf below;
The lowest branches kiss some rippling wave,
And with their blossoms spangle the blue tide.
Long climbing avenues of scented firs,
And cedars, dark even at blazing noon,
And tortuous walks, 'midst gnarled writhing boles,
That need each fibre of their twisted roots
To hold them to the slope. A cold stream flows
Of crystal waters, welling to a pool,
Over smooth pebbles—mottled, blue, and white—
To join the river. In the summer-tide,
The fair expanse of river and broad lands
Which glitter in the afternoon's bright sun,
Is fair to gaze upon. Then shall you hear
Light laughter, and stray chords of music float
Through all the woods; and own so fair a spot
Was never elsewhere fashioned."

But as this is the sort of stuff that any one can

write by the mile, we will drop it. Only we have a strange notion that if any eminent tragedian was to introduce this, with appropriate emphasis, into a heavy play, people would be found to applaud it, and the *Examiner* newspaper to praise it.

But please to understand that "The Springs" at Cliefden is made for a flirting pic-nic. For there is a famous little pavilion to dine in; and some lovely turf to loiter upon; and, what is especially charming, artful walks by which you can get away from everybody; and boats lying off the bank, upon the Thames, conducive to the same happy opportunity. So that it may be imagined there is scarcely a fine day throughout the early autumn that the spot is deserted.

The day usually commences in a little temper on the part of the Flirt, who wants to go from Windsor with Archy Warren on his dog-cart, and her little brother Jack, who is at

Eton, for a chaperon. Jack always looks another way when he is ordered, and never tells anything. But her parents not seeing the excursion in that light, although Warren's sister, even, is of the party, think she had better go

with them; and she has nearly consented—with a very ill grace though—when the wretched Jack lets out about a six-oar going up with the Lambtons, and Mainwarings, and Frank Halliford of the Guards, who plays the *cornet* almost as well as Koenig, and has got lungs stout enough to work the Apollonicon if needed, and that he—Jack—is to steer. Knowing the Lambtons, and Mainwarings, and Frank Halliford very well, she is sure that she will also be asked, and therefore is irresolute respecting the domestic britska. But the parents are unyielding, and her doom is sealed, with only one alleviation. As Jack is going in the boat, George Howard has his place on the box, because the greyhound, Cosmo, has the front seat, and George Howard does not bore one quite so much on the box. He is all very well, but "slow;" follows a subject of conversation tolerably, but never originates one; ties his handkerchief twice round his neck, and

will wear frilled shirts; and—type of every gentle dulness—plays the flute, which he takes to Cliefden with him, in case there is a wish for "a little music." But he is better than nothing,

and being one of those distressing people who always look pleased at everything, finds favour with the parents, as an amiable young man; and so, at last, the Flirt thinks she may put them all in high humour by patronizing him. He begs a flower for his coat, and she gives him a bit of scarlet geranium. And when she tells all the especial ones about this afterwards, and they know what it means, what a laugh, at George Howard's expense, there is! But he, good creature, wears the sprig proudly, and tells everybody quietly, "that Marian Ford gave it to him."

There is never much done before dinner at Cliefden that the Flirt cares about. The party is large, and all the people do not know one another; so they stare, and keep to their own sets. Archy Warren arrives, and, to Marian's extreme disgust, who is waiting for the boat, does not fly to her at once, but takes off Frank Halliford, as soon as he comes up by

water, with him, having all sorts of things to tell, in which some "little party" figures conspicuously. And these two sit on the branch of a tree that overhangs the river, hidden by the leaves, and smoking cigars, with a bottle of pale ale which they have made Jack steal from

the spring, wherein the liquids are cooling, dangling in the water by a bit of string.

Marian watches them, and, by a triumph of human chess-playing, contrives that Warren shall take her in to dinner. She does not, however, forget Frank—for the great attribute of the true Flirt is that she can keep two or three young men in her chains at once—but smiles so graciously at him every now and then, that at last he is perfectly happy in the idea that she is bored by being next to Warren, and would give much to be near himself:

They are joyous dinners in that large summer-house at Cliefden, if you collect the right set of people, who don't mind being crowded, or using the same plate for pigeon-pie and lobster-salad. The champagne-cork pops louder and takes a longer leap in the hilarity, and the million bubbles of the sparkling wine jump from their invisible source at the bottom of the glass to kiss the ruby lips that press the rim

more eagerly than in an orderly room. Laughter is more ringing, and conversation faster; and there is the prospect after dinner, not of the confined drawing-room to withdraw to, but the glittering river and the blue sky; the thick-leaved woods, the mossy turf, and the log hermitage.

There is a talk of going on the water when dinner is over. Long before the mass have arranged how they shall divide, a pair of sculls are seen dipping gently from the sides of a foreshortened skiff up the river towards Cook-

ham Lock, until they come into the shade of a goodly chesnut; and then, as the little boy at the stern holds on by a branch, music begins; and the blighted heart of Frank Halliford assures him that it is the Flirt and Warren, with her brother as "gooseberry picker,"—for so, by some Flirts that we know, is a useful third called. And Warren, who also plays very well, has had the unparalleled audacity to borrow Frank's cornet!

He is right. Under the tree the sculls are shipped, and the cornet produced from its box; when, after blowing through the mouthpiece and working the valves, and pulling out the slides, and then turning the cornet over and over, and finally trying something to himself, bending his head down very low,—after all this, which it would appear is proper to be always done, Warren begins to play the *finale* to *Lucia di Lammermoor*. And then—as the glassy water, disturbed only by dimpling eddies, or

the leap of a glistening fish who finds even the stream too tepid for his comfort—the hanging woods glowing in the afternoon sun, and the touching "*Tu che a Dio spiegasti l'ali*" floating in the deep still air—form a day-dream of entrancing loveliness; they think that only their

two selves are in the world. And they really *do* think this—Jack is forgotten altogether; and the feeling with which they notice the other boats when they come up alongside, and the inmates of course say with a giggle, "Don't let us disturb you, pray—you look very comfortable" —the bores!—is similar to that of awaking from a pleasant dream of being with somebody you are very fond of, to see nothing but your servant brutally pulling up the blinds to let in the cold daylight, as he insists upon the hour being half-past eight. The flirtation is thus broken up—for the time; and then a community of boats is established.

But by the time they get back again the ruddy autumnal twilight is creeping on: lights twinkle in the summer-house, and the *chalet* beyond it; and the tea is being got ready. The company still prefer being *al fresco*, and the sward is covered with ladies and gentlemen. And then the Flirt commences to make a *house*.

# CHAPTER IX.

## OF "MAKING A HOUSE."

"It was the cooling hour, just when the rounded
Red sun sinks down behind the azure hill."

BYRON.

THE process of *making a house* is one at which the Flirt is a great proficient; either at an evening party, or in a country mansion, or a pic-nic, or in fact anywhere where people are collected together, and charitably permitted to do as they like. It is accomplished as follows.

Society comprises four sets of people—1st, the Entertainers; 2nd, the Listeners; 3rd, the Bores; and 4th, the Blankets. By the Entertainers we do not mean "funny" people

who say "good things" constantly, never let a voice be heard but their own, play small practical or implied jokes, and would dance a hornpipe on the table or stand upon their head on a music-stool, if they thought it would get a laugh—such belong to Class 3—but well-informed persons *au courant* with all the lighter topics of the day, and more or less available in any diversion that may be proposed. The mission of the Listeners is to look pleasant, and appreciate. The Bores have been already depicted by a clever contemporary: and the Blankets are those dreary people who, however entertaining the matter may be that is before them, always preserve a fixed face of solemn aspect; and if they speak, usually say something *mal-à-propos*.

If the Flirt is not entirely taken up in philandering with "the object" for the time being, she, of course, is included in the first set; and as soon as circumstances admit, she "makes a house" as follows.

She carelessly, and with a plan entirely

imperceptible, places one or two chairs in tolerable approximation. One of these she occupies; and when she thinks that "the object" is looking at her, she assumes a most charming

expression of pensive melancholy—a look of deserted blighted sadness that attracts him at

once to her side. Then all her melancholy vanishes forthwith, and as the guests move about, she beckons another "capital" girl, and says aloud, "I want to speak to you, Annie; just for two seconds;" and adds in a lower tone when she comes, "Take this chair, and we will get John Maynard and his brother."

Still the company have no idea of what is going on. The Flirt's favourite beckons the other young men quietly, and says, "Keep about here, but don't sit down till we are all sure of our set;" and then they would like Laura Eversly, but that slow younger Horton is with her, and he will not do at all. Just then, to their horror, an innocent man—whose name, although he has been some time in the house, nobody ever thinks of asking—sinks down in one of the chairs! This will never do: he must be politely got rid of. So the party already collected preserve a dead silence, until the intruder, who is right in the centre,

gets uncomfortable, and edges off sideways, like a crab; upon which the Flirt directly places her bouquet on the chair, only removing it, as a hint, for some one nice to occupy the place.

And so the house is *made*. The chairs come closer together and the feet approximate, as if they were going to play a game at "Hunt the Slipper" sitting down; and then the great fun that goes on, with the famous anecdotes and *plaisanteries*, cannot be described. But it lasts until the mistress of the house, being a strong-minded lady, comes up and says—perceiving the effect it is having upon the others—"Come, come, this will not do. I cannot have all of you in a *coterie*;" at which the house breaks up with sorrow and subdued murmurs

But should the hostess lack nerve to do this, then the sitting is prolonged for a period that would almost be the death of Mr. Brotherton.

In like manner, the house is made on the

lawn at Clifden, where, all this time, we have left our company. It is so very warm that the Flirt has taken off her bonnet, and having found some wild hops, has twisted a branch into a wreath, and put it on her head, giving her the appearance of a *Reine Bacchante*—only in appearance, mind. And then, recollecting the guitar was put in the britska, Jack is sent after it; and he returns treating it as though it were a banjo, and speaking in the received dialect of Ethiopia, for which he is reprimanded.

Then comes the song, when a seat has been made for the Flirt, on a pile of boat-cushions. It is very dangerous, with respect to the hearts about her, as well it may be. For at that period they are melting, whilst wishes are waking, on poetical authority; and the still twilight, that makes eyes so large, and voices so doubly musical, influences the thoughts of everybody. Frank is very far gone indeed; and never thought so seriously about proposing

in his life. But what a fortunate thing to-morrow is, under such circumstances!

At last the party breaks up, and the battle of the boats begins; that is to say, all the girls want to go home by water, and none of the parents, again, see the necessity.

But the Flirt triumphs. The nicest lady of the party—just emerging from the yea-nay-ishness of the bride into the agreeable young married woman—says she must come; and of course Warren is in the boat. But now he does not row; he sits amongst the ladies, to play the cornet, as he says, and gives his oar to Jack, whose hands are like an armadillo's back. The whole crew is, indeed, disorganized; and how they get through Cliefden and Boveney Locks is marvellous.

But, somehow or another, they contrive it safely, to the air of "*Come è gentil*," and finally arrive home about two hours after the carriages during which time the respective parents have declared a hundred times "they never would

consent to anything of the kind again, as nothing compensated for the anxiety;" and have almost determined upon starting with lanterns along the towing path from the Brocas, to look after them.

The Flirt, however, gets home at last, and catches no cold, Warren's cloak having, in the most delightful manner, sheltered two figures instead of one, all the latter and darker part of the journey.

# CHAPTER X.

## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS.

"Not purple violets in the early spring
Such graceful sweets, such tender beauties bring,
The orient blush, that does their cheeks adorn,
Makes coral pale, and vies with rosy morn."

LEE.

THE Flirt at the Opera inclines to the pit tier: and talks about "that love Mario" over the edge of the box, to the tall handsome acquaintance, whom she introduces to her mamma. And she always thinks she sees Edward Hamilton in the stalls.

She has a singular knack of driving young men twelve in hand; keeping them all together, as Mr. Hughes does his horses.

She causes a Maelstrom in society, in

whose eddy all are irresistibly attracted towards the centre, which is herself.

She is very nice.

She allows you to press her hand, and has been known to return it; and sometimes permits the approximation of feet under the dinner-table—which is very delightful, especially when you are assured that it is not the castor of the leg you have been making silent love to, for the last quarter of an hour.

She has ever conceived quadrilles to be stupid things, preferring one Polka to half-a-dozen of them, and a *deux-temps* to either. But a Post-horn will shake her allegiance to all.

She bets gloves at the races, and if she loses is a defaulter. But she subsequently

arranges matters by working picturesque initials on a handkerchief, or a sovereign purse in crimson silk with steel beads.

She is very clever with a fan.

She is skilled in saying with great coolness "No—I think it was the next;" when the slower of her admirers asks if it is not the dance he is engaged to her for.

She does not object to walk out at the sea-side in a high wind; and may, with some little trouble, be persuaded to join a donkey party, to lunch from shrimps, at Pegwell Bay.

She loves Alboni better than Jenny Lind, because of her dash and spirit; and because she hears the great contralto called "a glorious fellow."

She can talk with her fingers; and in extreme cases, has been known to make telegraphic signs from the open window, to the young gentleman that her family do not approve of, in the wish to discover whether he is going to a certain party.

With cautious pressing she will own that she really did once peep into Byron: but has only heard of Paul de

Kock from her brothers, as being highly improper.

She is very great on board a yarth, or yacht, or however it is spelt, for we never clearly knew; and thereon abiding has been known with the greatest persuasion to smoke a cigarette:

the which is followed by evil consequences.

On being provoked thereunto, she will try to whistle.

At school she is the great counsellor of all the mischief: and for this reason is much esteemed by her companions.

## L'ENVOI.

If our sketches have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended—

We have loiter'd here awhile
Only to provoke a smile,
From a gay and graceful theme.
Light and passing as a dream—
Causing no more lingering hurt
Than the bright eyes of the Flirt.

Gentles, take it not amiss
If we give advice like this—
Let the Flirt none reprehend,
Nor importune her to mend,
Never chide her, cross, nor doubt her—
*What would parties be without her?*

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